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ABSTRACT

This document is a publication for the tenth televised Town Hall Meeting of The LegiSchool Project, an educational collaboration between California State University, Sacramento and the California State Legislature. The purpose of the meeting was to consider what laws and public policies are needed to protect young people from violence--both real and imaginary. The first selection of readings in the document provides background for policy issues under consideration. Focus is placed on society's rights to freedom and how those may be compromised by restrictions aimed at preventing violence. The readings in part two encourage participants to consider the merits of legislation for school safety and student security, the influence of the media and questions of control or censorship, and how to protect young people on the Internet. The work contains numerous newspaper articles, critical thinking questions, and essay ideas for students. An appendix lists legislation recently passed in these areas. (GCP)

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A Town Hall Meeting

Violent Images, Violent Acts: What Can Schools and Students Do?

California State Capitol
December 8, 1998

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An educational collaboration between the California State University, Sacramento and the California State Legislature

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A Town Hall Meeting

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California State Capitol
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The LegiSchool Project

Violent Images, Violent Acts: What Can Schools and Students Do?

Dr. Ken Futernick, Project Director and Editor
Dr. Barbara Arnstine, Moderator and Editor
Dr. Timothy A. Hodson, Project Administrator
Kolleen Ostgaard, Project Coordinator and Researcher

The LegiSchool Project

Fall 1998

Dear Town Hall Meeting Participants:

This Fall, the LegiSchool Project will conduct the tenth in a series of televised Town Hall Meetings from the State Capitol in Sacramento. Once again, the meeting will be broadcast live via cable by the California Channel.

The purpose of these meetings is to provide a forum in which California high school students, educators, and legislators can engage in face-to-face dialogue about problems of mutual interest. The topic for this Town Hall Meeting is, ***Violent Images, Violent Acts: What Can Schools and Students Do?*** Following this letter, you will find an introduction to the topic.

Participants at this event include students from Northern California high school classes who will be seated in one of the large hearing rooms at the Capitol. Several of these students will sit at the dias in front, along with legislators from both the Senate and the Assembly. Several classes watching from remote sites will be connected to us by telephone so that they too can ask questions of the panelists.

The moderator, Barbara Arnstine from CSUS, will lead a discussion among the panelists focusing on the issues presented in this packet. Later in the meeting, she will take questions from the students seated in the audience and at remote sites.

The background material, articles, and critical thinking questions included in this packet are designed to help the participants prepare for the meeting. We would like to encourage those of you who are interested in viewing the Town Hall Meeting to read the materials and discuss the questions before the event takes place on December 8.

If you would like a video copy of the Town Hall Meeting or want information about the LegiSchool Project, call the LegiSchool Educator's Hotline at 1-800-321-1966 or write to us at:

The LegiSchool Project
c/o: The Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento
6000 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95819-6081

We look forward to hearing from you and hope you enjoy the Town Hall Meeting.

Sincerely,

Ken Futernick, Ph.D.
Project Director

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Introduction

Is our society becoming more violent? As you consider this question, don't think of "our society" as some abstract idea that doesn't affect you. Think of "our society" as the social environment that you experience every day. Does fear of violence keep you from doing things you would like to do? Are the adults you interact with, such as parents and teachers, more or less worried about violence than they ought to be?

The violent acts we read about in the newspaper, and the violent images we see on television shows have become an increasing focus of public concern. A great deal of that concern has been directed toward the protection of young people through laws, school policies, and the rules that exist in their families. Our focus for this Town Hall Meeting is the protection of young people from violence – both real and imaginary (when it comes in the form of entertainment). What protection is necessary and how far it should go are the issues we will be thinking about and discussing in this booklet and at our Town Hall Meeting.

As we consider educational policies that respond to violence in our society, the focus of our Town Hall Meeting will be on young people as victims of violent acts, and violent images that pass as "entertainment." There have been some sensational cases of schoolyard violence lately, and young people attacking students has received a lot of media attention. But these events, although shocking, do not reflect a trend. In fact, recent studies show that schools remain relatively safe places. Nonetheless, violence on school grounds is a very serious matter. Our interest in this Town Hall Meeting is on young people as *victims* rather than perpetrators of violence and what we should do to prevent it.

In what ways are you a potential victim of violence? Are you a victim when you are made to feel afraid of violent acts? Perhaps you don't think you are. Or perhaps you have become so used to the images on television, you don't even think of them as violent anymore. But your parents or guardians, schools and the general public are worried about what they see as the increasing dangers you face in an increasingly violent world. They are particularly worried because violence seems to permeate every aspect of contemporary culture – from music lyrics to the leading television shows and the evening news.

Our public response to increased violence has ranged from installing metal detectors in schools to the use of rating systems for movies and television shows. Certain public protections have been almost universally accepted. For instance, we expect our hand luggage to be X-rayed before we get on an airplane and we know that an X-rated movie is not one that a seven-year-old child should see. However, some restrictions seem much more invasive of our private and personal lives. As we move from metal detectors and opening our luggage at the airport to metal detectors and locker searches at schools, we may raise questions about balancing the level of protection we need with the need to preserve certain rights that are fundamental to a democratic society.

The purpose of this Town Hall Meeting is to consider what laws and public policies we require in order to protect young people in California today. Part I of your readings will provide some background for your consideration of policy issues. First and foremost, we have to consider how and whether protection will limit the freedom that is so essential and so cherished in a democratic society. Our "First Amendment rights" – the right to information and ideas, the right to privacy as individuals, and the right to spiritual beliefs, can also be compromised by restrictions that aim at preventing violence. Our first background question is:
How far can we go in preventing violence, and still maintain our civil liberties?

Our second question in Part I has to do with *prevention* itself.
If we are to put resources into public policies that prevent violence, what policies will work?

To understand this question, we need to look at some of the conditions we suspect *lead* to violence.
Does television promote violence? What about poverty?

Part I will give you only a taste of these issues. To understand them more fully, you will have to research and read about them on your own.

After we begin to learn *how* public policy can prevent violence, we will examine the issues themselves.

Currently public discussion and policy is focused on three areas:
1. School safety and student security.
2. The media and questions of control or censorship.
3. Protecting young people on the Internet.

Our readings in Part II will give you an opportunity to consider the merits of legislation in each of these areas. Our goal is to develop ideas about what our communities and our state should do. As you can see in the Appendix, some legislation has been passed recently in these areas, mainly legislation that provides funding for local communities to set up their own programs. What should these programs look like? What should our state do? These are questions we want you to consider for this Town Hall Meeting.

Part I

CIVIL LIBERTIES AND THE CONDITIONS LEADING TO VIOLENCE

Part I
Background

Civil Liberties and the Conditions Leading to Violence

When we want to prevent something bad from happening, often we must place restrictions on what we do. This is especially true when it comes to preventing violence. Restrictions are never easy to accept, especially for young people who face a lot of them. As we grow up we want to gain control of our own life, not have it restricted by others. As independent adults, however, we soon discover that society restricts some of our freedoms.

When danger increases, often we increase restrictions until the danger passes. For example, when an airplane crashes, passengers are thoroughly searched at every airport the next day. This is called "increasing security" and *most* of the time it seems to make sense. Restrictions to our freedoms must always be questioned in a democratic society. Whether we call it "respect" or "equality," each of us wants the freedom to think and do as we please. The first background readings in this packet review our civil liberties as expressed in the first and fourth amendments of our Constitution and show you a number of court cases the American Civil Liberties Union is pursuing to protect individual rights.

The second part of our background reading deals with the conditions that promote violence. We need to examine these conditions if our long-range policies are to make any difference. Short-range solutions such as imposing longer prison terms and building more prisons may be seen as important methods for controlling violence, but they do not deal with the *causes* of violence. Since we are concerned with young people and their development and education, our focus will be on policies that *prevent*, rather than *control* violence. Therefore, we will need to look at ways we might alter the *conditions* that promote violence.

As our readings demonstrate, causes of violence can be traced to many things including early family experiences, relationships at school, and even exposure to violence in the media. Determining which factors have the greatest impact will have a great deal to do with political and educational policy-making.

Freedom and Prevention

The Original Contract with America's Families...
The Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution

First Amendment
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Second Amendment
A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Third Amendment
No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner; nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Fourth Amendment
The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Fifth Amendment
No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself; nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

Sixth Amendment
In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed; which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor; and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Seventh Amendment
In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of common law.

Eighth Amendment
Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Ninth Amendment
The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Tenth Amendment
The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

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ACLU BRIEFING PAPER

Number 10

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

THREE REASONS WHY FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS ESSENTIAL TO A FREE SOCIETY

It's the foundation of self-fulfillment. The right to express one's thoughts and to communicate freely with others affirms the dignity and worth of each and every member of society, and allows each individual to realize his or her full human potential. Thus, freedom of expression is an end in itself -- and as such, deserves society's greatest protection.

It's vital to the attainment and advancement of knowledge, and the search for the truth. The eminent 19th-century writer and civil libertarian, John Stuart Mill, contended that enlightened judgment is possible only if one considers all facts and ideas, from whatever source, and tests one's own conclusions against opposing views. Therefore, all points of view -- even those that are "bad" or socially harmful -- should be represented in society's "marketplace of ideas."

It's necessary to our system of self-government and gives the American people a "checking function" against government excess and corruption. If the American people are to be the masters of their fate and of their elected government, they must be well-informed and have access to all information, ideas and points of view. Mass ignorance is a breeding ground for oppression and tyranny.

A C L U – American Civil Liberties Union
125 Broad Street, 18th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10004-2400

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ACLU Cyber-Liberties

Online Censorship in the States

In a sweeping victory for free speech rights in cyberspace, the Supreme Court struck down the Communications Decency Act in *Reno v. ACLU* in June 1997. The Court granted the highest level of First Amendment protection to the Internet, and cyber-activists are still dancing in the streets.

But is cyberspace really safe from the censors?

Despite the Supreme Court's ruling, states are busy crafting censorship laws at home. At least thirteen states have passed legislation since 1995. This year, New Mexico has already passed a draconian censorship law, and bills are pending in 10 other states.

The ACLU succeeded in striking down three of these state laws so far, but the larger task lies ahead: to secure free speech online in each and every state where this right is threatened.

Our state lawmakers need to understand the Internet -- not gag it.

This year the ACLU is fighting bills in the following states:

State Bills Pending in 1998

California
Assembly Bill 1793, sponsor Assembly Member Runner. Requires all public libraries that receive state funds to adopt a policy to prohibit minors from accessing harmful matter on Internet terminals at the library.

Illinois
Assembly Bill 2568, sponsor Assembly Member Novak. Makes it a felony to disclose on "an adult obscenity or child pornography site the name, address, telephone number, or e-mail address of a person under 18."

Kansas
Senate Bill 670, sponsor Senator Huelskamp. Requires the mandatory use of blocking software by all users on Internet terminals at state-funded public libraries, school districts, and state and local educational institutions, colleges and universities.

Kentucky
Senate Bill 230, sponsor Senator Karem. Requires the mandatory use of blocking software on Internet terminals at public schools.

Missouri
Senate Bill 850, sponsor Senator Kenney. Requires the mandatory use of blocking software by all users on Internet terminals at public libraries.

New York
Assembly Bill 5395, sponsor Assembly Member Mazzarelli. Criminalizes engaging in sexually explicit conversation with minors over the Internet.

Assembly Bill 6453, sponsor Assembly Member Klein. Requires all public libraries to establish a policy to restrict minors' Internet access to obscene materials.

Ohio
House Bill 565, sponsor Rep. Terwilleger. Criminalizes the dissemination of material on the Internet that is "harmful to minors."

Rhode Island
Senate Bill 2864, sponsor Senator Cicillino. Makes it a felony to transmit by computer "any notice, statement, advertisement, or minor's name, telephone number, [or] place of residence . . . for the purpose of engaging, facilitating, encouraging, offering, or soliciting unlawful sexual conduct and/or any felony or misdemeanor."

Tennessee
House Bill 3353, sponsor Rep. Burchett. Requires the mandatory use of blocking software by all users on Internet terminals at public schools and libraries. Holds Internet service providers strictly liable for the dissemination of "obscene material, child pornography, or pornographic materials harmful to youth."

Virginia
House Bill 348, sponsor Rep. Marshall. Requires the mandatory use of blocking software by all users on Internet terminals at state-funded libraries. Imposes criminal penalties for communicating online material at libraries that is "harmful to minors."

State Laws that Regulate Speech on the Internet

California
Assembly Bill 132, enacted 7/97.
Sponsor: Rep. Baldwin.
Requires schools to adopt an Internet access policy regarding student access to sites with material that is harmful to minors.

Connecticut
House Bill 6883, enacted 6/95.
Sponsor: House Committee on Judiciary.
Creates criminal liability for sending an online message "with intent to harass, annoy or alarm another person."

Florida
Senate Bill 156, enacted 5/96.
Sponsor: Sen. Burt.
Amends existing child porn law to hold owners or operators of computer online services explicitly liable for permitting subscribers to violate the law.

Georgia
House Bill 1630, enacted 4/96.
Sponsor: Rep. Don Parsons.
Criminalized the use of pseudonyms on the Net, and prohibits unauthorized links to web site with trade names or logos. **Overturned, in *ACLU v. Miller*.**

House Bill 76, enacted 3/95.
Sponsor: Rep. Wall.
Prohibits online transmission of fighting words, obscene or vulgar speech to minors, and information related to terrorist acts and certain dangerous weapons.

Kansas
House Bill 2223, enacted 5/95. Expands child pornography statute to include computer-generated images.

Minnesota
House Bill 575/Senate Bill 585, enacted 7/97 (as part of the compromise education bill). Directs the Commissioner of Education to recommend computer software products to schools in order to block Internet access to speech that is indecent or intended to promote violence.

Montana
House Bill 0161, enacted 3/95. Expands child pornography statute to prohibit transmission by computer and possession of computer-generated child pornographic images.

New Mexico
Senate Bill 127, enacted 3/98. Criminalizes the transmission of communications that depict "nudity, sexual intercourse or any other sexual conduct." The ACLU has vowed to file a legal challenge to the law before it becomes effective on 7/1/98.

Nevada
Senate Bill 13, enacted 7/97. Creates an action for civil damages against persons who transmit unsolicited advertising over the Internet.

New York
Senate Bill 210E, passed 7/96.
Sponsor: Sen. Sears; Rep. DeStito.
Criminalized the transmission of "indecent" materials to minors. **Overturned, in *ALA v. Pataki*.**

Oklahoma
House Bill 1048, enacted 4/95.
Sponsor: Rep. Perry.
Prohibits online transmission of material deemed "harmful to minors."

House Concurrent Resolution 1097, passed 5/96.
Sponsor: Rep. Paulk
Directs all state agencies, including educational institutions, to remove all illegal obscene materials from their computer systems.

Virginia
House Bill 7, enacted 3/96.
Sponsor: Rep. Marshall.
Prohibits any government employee from using state-owned computer systems to send or access sexually explicit material. **Overturned, in *Urofsky v. Allen*.**

Senate Bill 1067, enacted 5/95.
Sponsor: Sen. Calhoun
Expands existing statute to criminalize electronic transmissions of child pornography.

Like the CDA, these state bills raise serious free speech concerns. They all overlook the unique nature of the online medium, and many censor speech that is protected by the Constitution for adults and older minors.

Laws that try to keep adult materials away from minors end up reducing all online content to that which is suitable for children -- the Supreme Court declared this outcome unconstitutional in *Reno v. ACLU*. Similarly, the use of blocking software at libraries prevents both adults and teenagers from getting access to valuable speech like sex education materials, abuse recovery discussions, and speech about lesbian and gay issues.

The draconian effect of state censorship bills doesn't stop at state borders. A message you post to the Internet today in New York City could travel the fifty states and the globe by tomorrow. You'd better be careful that the message isn't "indecent" in Oklahoma, "annoying" in Connecticut, or "vulgar" in Georgia.

These state laws pose a cumulative threat to online speech that may be even more powerful than the CDA, because every online user must comply with every state law -- or risk prosecution if their speech is accessed in a state that makes it illegal.

In addition to violating the First Amendment, many of these state censorship laws violate the Constitution's Commerce Clause because they criminalize online conversations that occur entirely outside the state's borders and burden interstate commerce. Earlier in this century, the Supreme Court struck down burdensome state laws that regulated the length of railway trains.

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As the court recognized when striking down the NY censorship law in *ALA v. Pataki*, the Internet is much like the railroad system, because it is used to transport speech and information all over the country. The New York law, like similar state laws, violated the Commerce Clause because it would have required a Texan who posts a web page or message to abide by New York standards, even if no one from New York ever saw the page or read the post.

The court in *ALA v. Pataki* held that internet users must be protected from "inconsistent legislation that, taken to its most extreme, could paralyze development of the Internet altogether."

The ACLU's nationwide network of local affiliate offices is ready and willing to counter state attacks on your right to speak freely online.

ACLU Victories in the Courts

ALA v. Pataki: In a precedent-setting opinion, the court struck down a New York State online "indecency" law because it violated the Commerce Clause of the Constitution, which prohibits states from regulating speech wholly outside their own borders and from imposing inconsistent state burdens on speakers.

ACLU v. Miller: This case struck down on free speech grounds a Georgia state law that made it a crime 1) to communicate anonymously or using a pseudonym on the Internet; 2) to create links to Web sites that use tradenames, trademarks, or logos.

Urofsky v. Allen: This case struck down a Virginia law that forbade state employees -- including university professors -- from using state-owned computers to access or transmit sexually explicit material.

For background information on state censorship bills and cases to challenge them, read Cyber-Liberties Update or sign up to receive this biweekly electronic newsletter on developments affecting free speech and privacy in the online world.

[Censorship | Privacy/Encryption | ACLU v. Reno | Cyber-Liberties Updates | Cyber-Liberties Home]

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Sex-Crime Laws Draw More Flak

California case highlights tension between children's safety and offenders' privacy

The Christian Science Monitor, August 13, 1998

By: Paul Van Slambrouck, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

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California's Sonoma County, known for its vineyards and tourism, has lately acquired notoriety of a different kind. The bucolic region is at the center of a highly charged national debate over the wisdom of recent laws enacted to combat sex crimes, particularly those against children.

This week, officers from the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department distributed fliers in the town of Guerneville, alerting residents that Russell Charles Markvardsen, who has a history of sex offenses involving children, had moved in. On Sept. 3, though, the case is slated to come before a federal judge as Mr. Markvardsen mounts the first challenge to the constitutionality of California's so-called Megan's law, which requires such neighborhood notification for sex offenders judged to be high-risk.

The case already has a tragic backdrop. Last month, another registered sex offender committed suicide in Santa Rosa, the county seat, shortly after local law enforcement officers notified a neighborhood of his presence. But police maintain there is no clear link between the public notification and that suicide - only close timing.

For critics of the nation's targeted assault on sex offenders in recent years, Santa Rosa is simply a vivid example of bad policy that's taking hold nationwide.

Franklin Zimring, a law professor at the University of California at Berkeley, says Americans are in the middle of a "child-sex panic" even though there is "no evidence the practice of sex offense is increasing" or that the recidivism rate among sex offenders is any higher than for other crimes.

Indeed, some form of Megan's law, named for a New Jersey girl murdered by a convicted sex offender in 1994, has been adopted by virtually every state. And while such laws are the most pervasive examples of action to deter sex crimes, they're not the only ones.

Montana, Georgia, and California have passed laws requiring chemical castration as a condition of parole for some sex offenders. Oregon and Virginia require blood samples from sex offenders for DNA data banks. And Kansas, along with a number of other states, has enacted laws permitting sex offenders to be detained after they serve their sentences if they're deemed dangerous and "mentally abnormal."

By all accounts, the public tide in favor of these get-tough policies remains strong. And, so far, while the courts have set some limits that civil libertarians regard as significant, most of the laws have been upheld.

Yet critics say the effectiveness of the cascade of sex-crime laws is yet to be proven, while their sometimes ugly consequences are piling up.

In June, shots were fired into the home of a sex offender in New Jersey after the public was notified about him, underscoring the criticism of groups like the American Civil

Liberties Union that such laws encourage vigilantism.

"We opposed this [Megan's] law from Day 1. It's misguided political posturing that will do nothing to reduce sex crimes in New Jersey," says New Jersey ACLU attorney David Rocah.

The New Jersey law that started the Megan's law trend was tied up in the courts for years, a process that led to amendments providing offenders with a right to challenge how they are classified, which determines the scope of public notification.

The California law makes no provision for any such procedures and was challenged on those grounds in a bid by Markvardsen's lawyers for a temporary restraining order against the leafletting by Sonoma police. While that request failed, other issues of due process and the scope and range of notification will be heard in his case in September.

Challenges elsewhere to Megan's laws have been made on the grounds that they represent a double jeopardy, or a second punishment for the same crime, and are a violation of privacy. But those claims have largely been rejected by the courts.

Stephen McAllister, a law professor at the University of Kansas and a former special assistant attorney general for that state, says Megan's laws are not unconstitutional but that the real debate over whether they amount to effective policy is just beginning.

In his view, the public has gained an enormous fear of the "stranger pedophile" from some highly publicized sex cases in recent years, even though most sex attacks on children are perpetrated by members of their own families. And while Megan's law disclosure and notification requirements may address the fear of assaults by strangers, it's unclear whether they will have any discernible impact on the overall rate of sex crimes.

In short, the trade-off comes down to whether the impact of public exposure on offenders' privacy is worth the chance it may prevent them from breaking the law again.

Southern California ACLU attorney Elizabeth Schroeder says Megan's law can be devastating to past offenders who have "done nothing wrong in 20 or 30 years."

But a spokesman for California Attorney General Dan Lungren, who is a Republican candidate for governor, says: "Megan's law is aimed at protecting citizens from the advances of sex offenders, and it's proven to be working in California."

Conditions Leading to Violence

What's triggering youth violence? Guns set off volatile mix of problems

The Denver Post, June 21, 1998

By: Delbert S. Elliott

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Americans are afraid. Since the recent spate of school shootings, this fear isn't restricted to poor, inner-city neighborhoods, but extends to affluent suburbs, towns and rural areas.

For many, the epidemic of violence signals a breakdown in the social order. No place seems safe. Violence has invaded our homes, neighborhoods, schools, day-care centers, shopping malls and workplaces. Much of it seems to be petty, senseless, random, suggesting a wanton disregard for human life. And increasingly, perpetrators and victims alike are adolescents and children. Adults are actually at lower risk for serious violence than they have been for two decades. If there is an epidemic of violence, it is a youth epidemic.

Is the term "epidemic" accurate or a distortion borne of excessive media coverage?

Since 1988, the rate of violence against adolescents, especially those age 12 to 15, has increased substantially. So has the rate of adolescent homicides. But the proportion of adolescents perpetrating violent offenses has risen by only 5 percent to 10 percent.

So while today's youths are more often victims of violence, about the same proportion of youths commit serious violent acts, and with about the same frequency.

But today's violent acts are more lethal; far more result in serious injury or death. The fact that the adolescent homicide rate has more than doubled since 1988 is grim evidence of this. And this dramatic increase is explained almost entirely by increased use of handguns.

These findings do not suggest a massive failure in our social institutions or a dramatic decline in the commitment of most youngsters to responsible, lawful behavior. While levels of youth violence are unacceptably high, constituting a serious crime and public health problem, the difference now is that the violence is deadly.

So our concern should focus on the dramatic rise in juvenile use of handguns in assaults and on what has happened to cause these young people to lack respect for human life.

Since October, when three students were killed and seven injured in the school shooting in Pearl, Miss., more than a dozen students and several teachers have been gunned down by youngsters in suburban and rural schools.

These are terrible events, but atypical. Most adolescent homicides during the 1990s were inner-city killings. On any typical day since 1994, six or seven youths are slain in this country. We have heard very little from the media about other children killed since October, most of them inner-city, minority youths.

The highly publicized school shootings still constitute a very small proportion of juvenile homicides. They do indicate that our suburban and rural communities and schools are not immune from the increased lethality of violent youths wielding guns. But the underlying causes of violence are the same, though less pronounced in suburban and rural areas than in cities.

Most violent behavior is learned. We all have potential for violence; we have seen it and know how to do it. But most people also have learned better ways to cope. Further, a commitment to moral action inhibits use of violence, which is unacceptable in most people's family and social networks. Under these circumstances, violent behavior becomes irrational.

But for too many youths, violence is seen as the only or most effective way to achieve status, respect and other basic social and personal needs. These youngsters have had little teaching or modeling of alternative ways to resolve conflicts. Like money and knowledge, violence is a form of power, and for some, it is seen as the only power available. When such limited alternatives are combined with a weak commitment to morals and little adult

monitoring or risk of punishment, violent behavior becomes rational. It can be a very effective way to get what one wants.

Violence has multiple causes. But increased youth violence reflects a change in levels of personal commitment to responsible, moral action (internal controls), in the social norms enforced in families, peer groups, schools, neighborhoods and communities (external controls), or in the proportion of youth who fail to meet expectations in these social settings because of limited competencies or discrimination.

Initial causes of violence are found in early family experiences: weak bonding; ineffective monitoring, discipline and supervision; exposure to violence in the home; and acquisition of expectations, attitudes, beliefs and emotional responses that support or tolerate violence.

Exposure to violence during childhood increases the risk of violent behavior during adolescence by as much as 40 percent, research shows.

Yet most youths who are physically abused do not go on to become serious violent offenders. Exposure to abuse by parents, siblings or boyfriends has a stronger effect than that of heavy exposure to violence on television and film. But this latter type of exposure also can have a significant effect.

When there is strong family bonding, effective teaching of moral values and norms, and adequate monitoring of behavior, the effect of media violence is negligible. Without these protections, its effect can be quite strong. What is learned is not only how to do violence, but also a desensitization to violence and rationalizations for disengaging one's moral obligations to others.

Even if violence is not modeled in the home, the absence of effective social bonds and controls, together with a failure to teach conventional norms and values, puts children at risk of later violence. In fact, parental neglect may have an even stronger effect than physical abuse on later violence, as it appears to be more damaging to youth development and involves three times as many youths.

Some neighborhoods also teach and encourage violence, via gangs, drug and other illegal markets, high levels of exposure to violence, role models and rewards for violence, and a need to carry a gun for protection. Single-parent families, ineffective parenting, violent schools, high dropout and adolescent pregnancy rates, substance abuse and unemployment are all concentrated in such neighborhoods.

While these typically are areas of extreme poverty, the critical feature most directly linked to excessive violence, crime and substance abuse is the absence of any effective social organization and coherent culture.

Family resources are insufficient to support neighborhood businesses and services. A highly transient population makes it difficult to establish common values and norms, informal support networks and social controls. Chronic unemployment results in isolation from legitimate labor markets and undermines the relevance of completing school. Illegitimate enterprises and gangs emerge, in part because the neighborhood has no effective means of resisting such activity, and in part because they provide some economy and some stable social organizations for youth.

A poor neighborhood is not necessarily a bad neighborhood for raising children. Those that are effectively organized and have shared values have low rates of violence, crime and substance abuse.

Life in a bad neighborhood can be devastating, even on a good family. Not only is positive modeling rare, but also access to conventional jobs and mainstream institutions is limited by racism, isolation from the labor market and few political or business connections. Opportunities to join gangs and tap into the illicit economy are often greater, offering a quick return for little effort. For many, this more than offsets the risks of violence.

Schools, meanwhile, have their own potential for generating conflict, frustration and violent responses. A successful social adjustment at home increases the likelihood but does not guarantee a non-violent adjustment to school and peers. These are new social systems where one must find her or his niche. Each school has its own demands and requirements. Failure to succeed academically in increasingly competitive situations, to be accepted by one's peers

and to be attractive to the opposite sex, all create new forms of stress during adolescence. The combination of new conflicts and reduced adult monitoring increases the likelihood that violence may emerge.

During middle school or junior high, a status hierarchy emerges, and much violence at school is related to peer rejection, competition for status and status-related confrontations. Serious violence usually is associated with groups of youths who are seen as failures at school and rejected by conventional cliques. It is in these groups that violence is modeled, encouraged and rewarded. Here, justifications for disengaging one's moral obligation to others are taught and reinforced.

The effects of early exposure to violence, weak self-control and poor family monitoring, and aggressive behavior developed in childhood all influence the type of friends one chooses, and the type of friends, in turn, largely determines what behavior will be modeled, established and reinforced during adolescence.

Still, a strong bond to parents can insulate youngsters from the influence of delinquents - as long as the friendship network is not dominated by such youths.

Another factor often contributing to violence is substance abuse.

Alcohol is implicated in more than half of all homicides and assaults at home. Parents who abuse alcohol and drugs are more prone to be physically abusive and neglectful of children. Illicit hard drugs do not play a strong role in the onset of violence; such behavior typically precedes use of drugs like crack cocaine. Hard-drug use does appear to increase the rate of violent offenses and the length of violent careers, however.

Violence and substance abuse are strongly associated, but how much is a causal relationship is unclear. They are known to have common causes, and the relationship is at least partly spurious.

By contrast, the link between violence and guns keeps getting stronger. Since 1985, the firearm-related homicide rate for adolescents has increased more than 150 percent. Guns now account for nearly three fourths of all murders of young African-American men.

Surveys estimate that 270,000 guns are taken to school daily. Not much is known about why more youths today carry and use guns. Anecdotal evidence suggests it is to "show off," to ensure "respect" or for self-defense. In part, it is a response to the perception that police and school authorities cannot protect youth or maintain order. There is evidence that dropouts, drug dealers and those with a violent record are more likely to carry a gun. And 80 percent of firearms used in crimes are obtained illegally.

Violent behavior apparently is reduced, though, with a successful transition into adult roles - work, marriage, parenting. In one national study, nearly 80 percent of adolescents who were serious violent offenders reported no such offenses in adulthood. Those with steady jobs or a stable intimate relationship were unlikely to continue their violent offending.

It appears that growing up in dysfunctional families and disorganized neighborhoods has two major effects related to continued violent behavior.

First, these youths tend to have less personal competence, self-efficacy, social skills and self-discipline. Growing up in these settings inhibits successful adolescent development. So these youngsters are less likely to adapt to new social contexts and less prepared to complete school and enter the labor market.

Second, when it comes time to make the transition into adulthood, opportunities for employment in conventional, mainstream institutions are limited. This reduces the chances of marriage or a stable intimate relationship. Combined, these conditions increase the likelihood that violence, once initiated, will become a permanent lifestyle.

Delbert S. Elliott, Ph.D., is director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

KIDS WHO KILL/REACTIONS TO THE SPRINGFIELD SHOOTING -- WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR BEHAVIOR

The Seattle Times, June 4, 1998

By: Pamelia Eakes and Kenneth Eakes, Special to the Times

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In Chicago in 1974, a 2-year-old boy, still a toddler, was sexually assaulted and beaten to death with a baseball bat by two neighborhood boys, ages 11 and 12.

Initially, the media focused on the pain, fear and suffering the toddler must have experienced during the last hours of this unspeakable and unforgettable violent crime. Then the dialogue turned to the question of what kind of pain, fear and suffering could have conditioned the two young assailants to consider committing such a heinous act of violence. Eventually, the concern of the community settled on the question of how severely the two boys should be punished, so as to best protect society and send a message to other would-be juvenile offenders.

Fast-forward to 1998, where acts of horrific juvenile violence in bedroom communities like Jonesboro, Ark., and Springfield, Ore., have sparked strikingly similar outcries to those expressed after the Chicago incident. Again, we hear calls for adult trials for junior-high-school students, pleas for more armed security in schools, and expressions of bewilderment from those trying to unearth the causes of the crimes.

The tragedies in Chicago, Jonesboro, Springfield and the thousands of communities that have been affected by the epidemic of youth violence in the past quarter-century are the result of a societal failure to teach children the value of peace and respect at a very young age. It is parents and communities who have failed, not our children.

Perhaps 11-, 13- and 15-year-old children who commit such heinous acts of violence should be tried and punished as adult criminals, but only if we adults are willing to accept responsibility for our failure to teach our children the value of peace. Long prison sentences and death penalties for children are not solutions, but rather tragic admissions of our failures.

We must, of course, protect society from those children who, for whatever reason, have already turned to violent crime as a means of dealing with the world around them. But what about the innocent children who are being prepared and conditioned today to commit acts of violence tomorrow? Children who, without our help, could possibly become perpetrators of crime and violence against us. Children who, with our help, will likely become good citizens and tomorrow's leaders.

Unless we invest sufficient resources now to prevent children from turning to violence and criminal behavior, we will likely find that, in the future, we will not have sufficient resources to protect ourselves from our children.

Last year, at a Seattle benefit for Mothers Against Violence in America, Dr. Arun Gandhi quoted his grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi, as saying, "What we do speaks so loudly (to our children) that what we say cannot be heard." He went on to tell an eloquent, parable-like story about how his father punished himself instead of Arun when he caught his young son lying to him - explaining to him that he (father) has failed terribly in his efforts to teach Arun the value of honesty, and therefore must bear the consequences of his failure.

Dr. Gandhi's message gives us the hope and wisdom we need to realize that our failures are not beyond repair. Like Gandhi, we must hold ourselves responsible, as parents and communities, for the actions of our children. For they are what we, through our actions, teach them to be.

While there are no excuses for the violent acts committed by these children, their actions are no doubt a product of our society and its unwillingness to teach our children core values of respect and peace at a very young age. Violence is preventable, not inevitable - there should be no higher priority than nurturing and teaching our children in order to give shape and direction to the future of our world.

Pamela Eakes is the founder and president of Mothers Against Violence in America (MAVIA), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to reducing violence by and against children. Her husband, Kenneth Eakes, is on MAVIA's advisory board.

Who's really killing our kids?

The Denver Post, June 7, 1998
By: Andrew Males
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A worker sprays an office with a semiautomatic handgun, killing two. A former employee rakes a transportation department yard with an assault rifle, killing four. A man guns down two neighbors, the latter in front of her shrieking 3-year-old. A rifle-wielding father chases his wife and three children, shooting all to death. A man slaughters five. These cases represent just a few of dozens of recent "rage killings" by adults.

U.S. adults are eight to 20 times more likely to murder with guns than adults in other Western nations. Lamentably, official reactions to the recent spate of gun killings at schools around the country do not take into account this disturbing statistic. Its omission misleadingly gives credence to assertions by President Clinton and experts that today's grown-ups confront a younger generation desensitized to brutality by its own "culture" of violent media and seemingly "unable or unwilling to take responsibility for their actions." In truth, it is grownup society, beginning with the president, that is desensitized by the commonality of real adult violence and that refuses to take responsibility for violent homes and communities that breed more violent kids.

Of 20 million middle-school and high-school students, fewer than a dozen have killed at school this year. Of 20,000 secondary schools nationwide, only about 10 have reported a murder on campus. It is entirely justified to deplore any killing at a school. It is another matter for self-righteous adults to lose all perspective and scold all young people. The schoolkids reacting in revulsion and tears to the mayhem on their campuses, not the tiny number of shooters, are the true representatives of the next generation.

Conversely, the most extremely disturbed fraction of our young mimic their adult counterparts. The school shootings by students over the last eight months killed 11 youths and six adults. That is fewer kids than are murdered by parents, and fewer adults than are killed by partners, in just two days of household violence in the United States.

The youth culture of violence is the adult culture of violence. There is no difference. It is striking how closely school shootings resemble "rage killings" by adults. All involve males, none poor, nearly all white, nearly all armed with sophisticated firepower, all triggered by fury at personal slight - dismissal from work or expulsion from school, or rejection by wives, girlfriends, co-workers or fellow students.

The president struggles to "make sense of the senseless" student shootings. His struggle should expand beyond "youth violence" - which composes 13 percent of violent crime and 8 percent of murder, the FBI reports - to the mostly overlooked brutalities in America. On the day of the Jonesboro, Ark., school killings, a Daly City, Calif., mother was arrested for suffocating her three children with duct tape. A few days after the West Paducah, Ky., student shootings, three West Virginia parents were arrested for burning down their house, deliberately immolating five children. The day after the Springfield, Ore., school cafeteria massacre, an Arleta, Calif., mother was arrested for murdering her two young children and burying them in the national forest.

Recent studies estimate that gunplay at school kills 20 to 30 youths a year, although there is no evidence the toll is higher today than in the past. By contrast, studies by the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect show that 2,000 to 3,000 children and youths are murdered each year by parents or caretakers, a toll that clearly is rising. Annual surveys of high school

students, by Monitoring the Future researchers, report that weapons-related violence in schools is no higher today than in the 1970s. But the rate of children being murdered by their parents doubled during that time.

In response to the school shootings, the president wants to enhance children's safety. But his own agencies' figures show that the best way to do that would be to target the American family. Three of four young murder victims - 90 percent of them under age 12 and 70 percent of them aged 12-17 - are killed by adults, not by juveniles. A 1994 survey, conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, of hospital emergency records of 900,000 treatments for violent-crime injuries found that such injuries were eight times more likely (410,000) to occur in the home, and five times more likely (246,000) in the workplace, than in schools (55,000).

Despite these alarming statistics, the president has never given a major address focusing on children victimized by violence in the home. Even though family violence is the chief killer of children under age 13 and women of all ages, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other violence-prevention agencies barely acknowledge it exists. In this climate of heightened family chaos and high-level denial, the wonder is that school carnage isn't more common.

Odds and statistics are of no comfort to those victimized by violence. But larger policy, resource allocation and academic analysis should focus on the biggest dangers to kids. The Clinton administration's own agencies have assembled reams of ignored statistics showing that today's teen-agers are being raised by a parent generation displaying exploding rates of domestic violence, property crime, drug offenses, addiction and family instability. Unfortunately, talking about family violence, about how uncannily teenage behaviors reflect those of adults (good and bad), does not meet the needs of politicians and politically attuned authorities. Clinton's presidency evidences the disturbing extent to which the most serious crime and health issues have been refashioned, through exhaustive polling and focus groups, into popular moral fables. In this age of political handlers, it is hard to imagine a national leader willing to take on the distressing "adult" problem.

To the contrary. Conventional wisdom holds that grown-ups vote and kids don't, that no politician wins today without flattering the baby boomers, and that 1990s wedge-issue politicking demands moralistic "us vs. them" positioning. When authorities treat the worst dangers young people face as taboo topics because they are impolitic to raise, they dismiss young people themselves as unimportant and falsely hold up the younger generation as a symbol of all that has gone wrong with society. The question is not, "Where are the adults?" but "Where is adulthood?"

Andrew Males, a doctoral candidate in social ecology, wrote the forthcoming book "Framing Youth: Ten Myths about the New Generation."

VIEWPOINT: COMMUNITY EFFORT NEEDED TO SOLVE PROBLEMS THAT LEAD TO YOUTH VIOLENCE

The News Tribune (Tacoma, WA), June 18, 1998

By: Tom Vander Ark

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The growth of youth crime in our community is a great concern to our police, parents and to young people themselves. It is difficult not to listen to the reports of violence from communities near and far and ask, "What have we become as a society? Who is responsible? What will we do?"

Our schools can do a better job of responding to community needs and reinforcing community values, but youth violence is not primarily a school issue. It is a community issue.

Schools certainly play an important role and feel the effects of youth violence, but the solutions to a complex set of problems must be owned and implemented by the whole community. This becomes apparent when the root causes for violence are examined:

* Consumer culture. Consumerism has become the religion of the instant-gratification culture. The focus on individual rights and desires has displaced a recognition of personal and collective responsibilities.

* Violent media. A morally bankrupt fixation on violence is fed by a constant stream of television shows and news, movies and video games whose graphic depiction of violent acts has anesthetized a generation of young people to the sanctity of human life.

* Job pressure. The new information economy offers more opportunity than at any time in history. The price we pay for our newfound prosperity includes rapid job turnover, high mobility, longer hours, more working parents and a growing income and information gap.

* Family decay. Many young people are growing up with little adult contact. Half of all marriages end in divorce. One third of our children live in or near poverty.

* Eroding foundations. The erosion of many of our civic, social and religious traditions has led to a shaky moral, ethical and spiritual foundation for many of our young people. This is the first generation where a majority of young people are growing up in homes without a connection to a faith community and in a society stripped of role models.

When will we say enough is enough? Where to turn for solutions? In 1990s fashion, will we develop a class action lawsuit? Will we develop more legislative Band-Aids, install metal detectors and teach "anger management" and gun safety classes in our schools? Or will we, as individuals and communities, move beyond selfishness and rediscover community?

Only a comprehensive communitywide effort will turn the tide. Elements of this effort should include:

* Character. Re-establish a common moral fabric based upon mutual respect and personal responsibility. We are dealing with a moral crisis; our response must be grounded in the dignity of life and point us all beyond selfishness to the common good. Parents, teachers, coaches, employers and pastors must teach and model respect and responsibility.

* Choices. Create more positive alternatives for young people and expand access to family support services. Young people must learn to be responsible and see the benefits of positive choices.

* Consequences. Intervene early and decisively at signs of substance abuse and violent tendencies. Consistently apply swift and severe consequences. It is time for our courts to support police and school efforts to curb violence.

* Community. Develop community leaders, promote service learning and work opportunities for youth. It is time for everyone over the age of 18 to register to vote and become engaged in local civic life.

We all have an important role to play to curb violence and support families. Our civic, business and spiritual leaders must promote a common vision for this community that is large enough for us all. We each must take on the responsibility to create the future we desire. No government program will solve the problem. It comes down to you and me. The future is our responsibility.

It is time for parents to parent their children and teach them to be responsible for their own actions. If parents need new skills, they must have the opportunity to learn. If they need more flexible time, employers must create more flexibility. Churches must expand outreach ministries to youth and families, to promote social justice and reconciliation.

Community agencies must play a stronger role in developing and implementing youth programs. Schools must model and teach respect and responsibility, open their doors to the neighborhood and recognize their role as community-building institutions. Every student should have at least one sustained powerful adult relationship at home and at school.

If we are to turn the tide, families in crisis must be reached, for it is from them that schools receive drug-impacted students, abused children, students without social skills. Our agencies and schools will require a higher level of support - in time, talent and resources.

Recognizing the breadth of the challenges and importance of shared ownership of the interventions, Federal Way City Manager Ken Nyberg and I met to inventory current efforts and identify what else our community can and should do to curb youth violence. We met with police, health and hospital administrators as well as students, parents and principals to discuss our next steps as a community.

Members of the Federal Way City Council and the school board will review our plans later this month. We're beginning a communitywide conversation that will last into the coming school year.

It is time for us to set, support and uphold high expectations for behavior and achievement for all our children. We shall be no better or worse than that which we choose. Let us choose to be a great place to live, learn, work and play.

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Federal Way residents and others who want to share their concerns and suggestions regarding youth violence can visit the Community Resource Center at the SeaTac Mall between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, e-mail Tom Vander Ark (vanderark@fwsd.wednet.edu) or mail comments to him at 31405 18th Ave. S., Federal Way, WA 98003.

Part I
Critical Thinking Questions

1. How can a person become de-sensitized to violence? What in your experience de-sensitizes you?

2. Is your school a safe place? Do students and/or teachers fear for their safety? How do *you* contribute to its safety? Do you feel obligated to do so?

3. Is violence the inevitable product of poverty and despair?

4. In the Cyber-Liberties article, which of the legal cases involving Internet activities seem important to you? Which ones did you think were foolish?

5. If you were serving on a jury and a person pleaded "not guilty" to a violent crime on the grounds that a violent movie led him to commit the crime, how would you respond?

Part II

PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE AND PREVENTING VIOLENCE

Part II
Issues

Protecting Young People and Preventing Violence

When we are very young, protection is comforting. Someone checks the closet for monsters; we are lifted up from the barking dog; someone comes when we cry in the night. As we grow older, some protections seem more of a burden than a comfort.

Unless they are excessive, the restrictions that parents impose on their children are a private matter. But restrictions imposed by the school or the state affect many young people, and therefore need to be carefully scrutinized.

In Part II of your readings, we will look at three areas where school and public policy try to provide young people with protection against violence.

In the first section on school safety and student security, we will consider just how widespread school violence is and what educators are doing to prevent it. You will have to consider whether schools are safe enough, what might be done to make them safer, and whether more restrictive measures are needed.

The second section considers the issue of media and censorship. How much should parents and schools control what young people read and see? As improvements in technology make communication easier, it also lessens the control we have over what gets communicated. Images of violence are everywhere, and as yet, we are not sure of their full impact on people – especially the young and impressionable.

Technology brings us to the issues discussed in our last set of readings which have to do with protecting young people on the Internet. The benefits of computer technology are not without risk, and it will take carefully thought-out public policy to minimize that risk without jeopardizing our right to free speech.

A democratic society has to protect its citizens with minimal limitations on individual freedoms. Parents and schools have to protect young people against harm as they grow up, but at the same time encourage them to take risk. These are difficult tasks in the best of times. In a society that seems to be increasingly violent, these tasks become even more difficult. But one thing we do know in a democratic society is that those who follow the law must also help to make it; those who are protected, like you, must also be heard. What should we do about the violence you and other young people are experiencing? We invite you to think about and speak to these issues.

School Safety and Student Security

The Sacramento Bee - October 15, 1998

WASHINGTON

School violence still uncommon

Ninety percent of schools report no serious violent crimes such as robbery and weapon attacks, despite the deadly string of shootings that led many to tighten security, the government said Wednesday in advance of a White House conference on school safety.

Still, "even one incident of crime in school is too many," Education Secretary Richard Riley said in releasing a report on school safety.

The definition of serious violent crimes includes attacks with a weapon, rapes, robbery, murder and suicide. School crime is down overall.

The report and today's conference on school safety are in response to six multiple homicides at public schools that left 16 people dead in the last academic year.

Forty-three percent of schools reported no crime in 1996-1997, while 90 percent reported no serious violent crime. However, the proportion of students reporting gangs at their schools increased to 28 percent from 15 percent between 1989 and 1995.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELEASES FIRST IN SERIES OF SCHOOL SAFETY REPORTS

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley today called for heightened efforts to address discipline and violence in schools and cited data from the first in a series of reports to be released detailing the problem.

According to a report from the National Center for Education Statistics, ***Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-97***, 43 percent of elementary and secondary school principals reported no incidents of crime in their schools. Forty-seven percent reported incidents such as theft/larceny, vandalism, physical attacks and/or fights without a weapon; ten percent reported one or more serious violent crimes, such as rape or sexual battery, suicide, robbery, physical attacks or fights with a weapon.

This survey is the first of five reports on school safety and violence prevention efforts to be released within the next year. They serve as precursors to a national report President Clinton has requested on the overall state of school safety.

"This report presents the first hard look at recent statistics telling us how much violence occurs in our nation's schools," said U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley. "Although I am troubled by the number of crimes occurring and believe that even one incident of violence in our schools is too many, overall most of our schools remain safe havens for the majority of American children. Ninety percent of our schools are free of serious violent crime and we need to aggressively help the ten percent that are confronting real problems."

Thirty-seven percent of schools reported from one to five crimes and 20 percent reported six crimes or more. According to the survey, less serious crimes were more common than serious violent crimes. Physical attacks or fights without a weapon led the list of reported crimes, with about 190,000 such incidents reported to police in 1996-97, followed by 116,000 incidents of theft or larceny, and 98,000 acts of vandalism. With serious violent crimes, the survey showed that schools reported about 4,000 incidents of rape or other type of sexual battery, 7,000 robberies, and 11,000 incidents of physical attacks or fights with weapons.

"This study underscores the need for efforts to be tough minded when dealing with young people who are truly violent," said Riley. "At the same time we need to remember that some children can just get disconnected and lose their way. We need to continue efforts to reduce crime and discipline problems in schools. Smaller schools, schools-within-schools, strong conflict resolution programs, zero tolerance programs, increased school uniform policies and more after school learning centers are all positive steps being taken to address the needs of local communities. The President's request for $200 million to expand after-school programs as safe havens of learning would help tens of thousands of students keep on the right track."

The survey was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 1,234 public elementary, middle and secondary schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Principals were asked to provide information about incidents of crime and violence that were serious enough for the police or other law enforcement representatives to have been contacted. They were asked to report only on incidents occurring both during or after school hours in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at school-sponsored events or activities held in places other than school grounds or school property.
Other survey findings include:

- Schools that reported serious discipline problems were more likely to have experienced one or more incidents of crime or violence, and were more likely to experience serious violent crime than those with less serious discipline problems;
- Most public schools reported having zero tolerance policies toward serious student offenses such as weapons possession. A zero tolerance policy is one that mandates predetermined consequences or punishments for specific offenses. Most schools, 78 percent, reported having some type of formal school violence prevention or reduction program;
- Overall, about 1,000 crimes per 100,000 students were reported in the schools. This included about 950 per 100,000 that were not serious or violent (theft, vandalism, fights or assaults without a weapon) and about 50 serious violent crimes per 100,000 students (rape or sexual battery, robbery, fights with a weapon, murder and suicide.
- Three percent of all public schools require students to wear uniforms; and
- Serious, violent crimes were more likely to occur in large schools and in central cities.

Copies of ***Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-97*** can be obtained from the National Library of Education (202) 219-1692 or by downloading it from the website http://nces.ed.gov.

STUDENT'S HOME YIELDS CACHE OF WEAPONS;
VIOLENCE: SCHOOLS ADOPT A VARIETY OF WAYS TO TACKLE PROBLEM.

Los Angeles Times, May 23, 1998

By: Mark Fritz, Times Staff Writer

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Some schools are getting tougher, hiring security guards and installing metal detectors and expelling students who so much as mutter a threat. Some schools are getting softer, creating peer-mediation panels and mentoring programs and hotlines so kids can vent without violence.

Some schools, in a grim modern twist on the fire drill, make kids sit quietly in locked classrooms while a hypothetical psycho stalks the halls. Some schools are doing all of these things; others, nothing at all.

Yet, according to analysts and educators who study the phenomenon of random, unanticipated schoolplace violence, there is no silver-bullet solution to stopping a demented kid from grabbing a gun and making people pay for an adolescence gone awry.

"The book is still being written on developing strategies for these types of things," said Ronald Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Center in Westlake Village. "Clearly, they are not going to be able to prevent all of the crises. If you can't prevent them, the next best thing is how to prepare for them."

The shootings in Oregon on Thursday marked the sixth instance in the past six months in which a student or students began spraying bullets across campus with a creepy resolve. Though seemingly freakish occurrences by themselves, the fact that they all took place in predominantly white, middle-class school districts in small towns with no history of violent crime has created deep fears at other predominantly white, middle-class school districts with no history of violent crime.

The experts have profiled the killers, studied the school grounds, sized up the security systems and checked the exits, from Jonesboro, Ark., to West Paducah, Ky., to Springfield, Ore. They've even created a new kind of category for a new kind of schoolyard behavior: Intermittent explosive disorder.

But it remains uncertain whether the spate of school shootings is a statistically meaningless cluster of similar events or a scary new social trend, whether kids are becoming more barbarous or whether, as crime statistics indicate, juvenile violence is on the downswing.

Some analysts say, just as copycat airplane hijackings and terrorist bombings were as infrequent as they were deadly during their heyday, the current streak of high-profile school shootings may transform schools as dramatically as the nation's airports.

Because of these shootings, more school districts nationwide already have embraced high-profile security measures such as metal detectors, surveillance cameras and campus security officers, said Stephens.

"They're gravitating toward the things that are easy to quantify," he said. "The things where you can say: 'We've done something.' "

Times researchers John Beckham in Chicago, Edith Stanley in Atlanta, Lianne Hart in Houston and Anna Virtue in Miami contributed to this story.

School Security: A nationwide public school survey on security measures reports the following:
Visitors must sign in: 96%
Closed during lunch: 80%
Controlled access to:
Building: 53%
Grounds: 24%
Drug sweeps
Metal detector checks:
Random: 4%
Pass through daily: 1%
Percentages based on the answers of 1,234 respondents, out of 1,404 eligible schools
Source: U.S. Department of Education

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IPS grade schools face gun searches; Students and buses will be chosen at random in the district's stepped-up approach to security.

The Indianapolis Star, April 8, 1998
By: Leonard N. Fleming
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Indianapolis Public Schools police will search elementary schools at random with metal detectors to stem the rise of children carrying deadly weapons, school officials said Tuesday.

The first search could begin as early as next week, and searches could occur every two to three days. Targeted schools are to be chosen through a lottery system.

For those students who walk to school, IPS police will determine by lottery whether every fourth, fifth or sixth student will be searched. In addition, two buses will be randomly picked and all passengers will be checked.

This initiative comes after three elementary students were caught this school year with loaded handguns. Two of them were 8-year-olds who were arrested last month, accused of bringing .25-caliber handguns to school. Both are being held in a youth detention center.

One student said he brought the gun to school for protection from another student. The other student allegedly pointed a gun at a classmate because she was teasing him about his ears.

Superintendent Duncan Pat Pritchett said the intent of the searches is to deter children tempted to bring weapons to school.

This isn't the first time searches have been conducted at the elementary level. IPS police have checked schools at the request of principals, but have not done so this year.

"We want our children and our parents to understand that we believe in safe schools and that weapons have no place in them," Pritchett said.

He also said children must learn "that they cannot resolve conflicts" with weapons or violence.

For at least seven years, IPS officials have been conducting weapon searches with hand-held detectors at middle and high schools as part of a program that garnered national attention at the time.

Early on, every student was checked. But IPS scaled back because searching everybody was time-consuming and disrupted class time. Today, all searches are done randomly.

Even though IPS has been aggressive in its searches, more students are carrying weapons. Five weapons were taken from students last school year, but seven were confiscated in the first three months of 1998.

Alan Stephens, principal of School 114 on the city's Southeastside, helped investigate the second-grader who allegedly pointed the gun at another student in his school.

He's not sure that searching elementary kids for weapons would be an end-all deterrent, but it might keep incidents at a minimum.

Stephens said he's not sure that kids who are 7 years old know what they're doing, but "if these searches could stop one incident, I guess that we would have to welcome it. "

IPS Police Lt. Jim Stepancik said these types of searches should put parents of IPS students at ease.

"It's a horrible thought that it has to be done at an elementary school, but if it is implemented, I'd rather be safe than sorry," he said.

But Stepancik warned that parents need to do a better job of keeping weapons away from children. He suggests locking guns up and keeping ammunition and clips separate from the weapons.

In a statement, IPS Police Chief Jack Martin said that after the weapons check, officers will present a 15-minute session to help students make responsible choices. It will be initially shown to fifth-graders because they are next to enter middle school.

IPS Board member Michael W. Rodman said he will be supportive of the measure but finds it troubling that youngsters are carrying weapons to school.

"I find it sad that this is something we have to do now," Rodman said in a pained voice.

Pritchett said every elementary school won't be searched this year. In fact, the lottery system could pick the same school several times over, he said.

He's also considering placing the three elementary schools where the guns were found - Schools 60, 82 and 114 - on the same schedule as middle schools, where searches occur more frequently.

Pritchett said the time has not come in IPS to have an officer camped out in every elementary school. That type of move would force the district to double the size of its police force, which wouldn't be feasible.

VOICES: A FORUM FOR COMMUNITY ISSUES; YOUTH OPINION; CAMPUS VIOLENCE STRIKES CLOSE TO HOME

Los Angeles Times, November 1, 1997

By: Anna Marie Stolley

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Another student has been killed on **campus.** On Oct. 22, a 21-year-old man tracked down his 16-year-old ex-girlfriend at John Glenn High School in Norwalk and shot her in front of her classmates. The murder of Catherine Tran has raised questions about public school security. ANNA MARIE STOLLEY talked to local high school students about how safe they feel on their campuses.

GABRIELA LOPEZ, 16, senior, Reseda High School
My school is pretty safe. A few years ago, one student at Reseda killed another. Because of that shooting, people still think Reseda is a dangerous campus, but it's not. Security is pretty tight. They have random metal detections in class; they check every third student. It's reassuring that they do that. We also have security guards at the main entrance and there's a police officer around.

I don't know anyone who has brought a knife or a gun onto our campus. If I did, I would report it right away. There are no names on the bullets inside a gun. I think the majority of the students here would do the same. As a student body, we do not want history to repeat itself.

One way to keep campuses safe is through education. We have a program called Weapons Are Removed Now. We meet every Monday at lunch and make up skits to take to junior high and elementary schools. We teach them not to bring guns to school and that reporting weapons is the smart thing to do.

SANDY SHIN, 14, freshman, University High School
There are a lot of fliers around our school that say if you see a weapon, save a life and tell someone. I would do that.

I think my school is safe--although we don't have metal detectors and I think we should. We have security guards and an administrator at the back gate.

This is my first year at a public school and I can get scared. I went to private school with only girls. My parents are worried about my being here. They watch the news and hear about what happens on some campuses. When they went to school in Korea, it was a lot safer. My parents are very protective of me. They said that if I have any problems, they'll put me in another school, but I've made friends and like it here.

KAMERON SMITH, 15, sophomore, Westchester High School
If someone wanted to get on my school's campus and kill a student, they could probably find a way.

Westchester sometimes has "tardy sweeps" after the last bell rings, when they round up everyone not in class- rooms. You have to prove you belong in the school. We have security guards and the police are around. But there are still people who don't belong on campus who just walk right inside.

I've seen some bloody fights on campus, but usually people are just using their fists. We have some gang problems, but generally gangs aren't on campus because they know the police will arrest them.

We don't have metal detectors. Sometimes they check kids' bags. As far as I know, Westchester students don't bring guns to school. Kids bring screwdrivers for protection and sometimes razor blades that they hide in their mouths. A razor blade will just cut somebody right up, so who needs a knife?

STEVEN GOLDBERG, 16, junior, Calabasas High School
Although it disturbs me to hear that a student was killed at another school, we're used to violence. We watch it on the news and in the movies. People my age don't scare easily over murder.

My school doesn't have a lot of security, but it's Calabasas. The teachers here joke that we live in a bubble. We don't have metal detectors or security guards. Sometimes they bring in a dog who sniffs out things like drugs, but I don't think the dog has ever found much more than aspirin. I don't think we should put any more money into making our school safer. We don't need metal detectors, and that dog's got to go.

It's a tragedy, but not a trend

The Sacramento Bee, March 26, 1998
By: Diane Griego Erwin
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Everyone from principals and psychologists to politicians and parents is scrambling to make sense of this week's string of violent crimes linked to young Americans.

The heavily armed Jonesboro, Ark., boys, ages 13 and 11, who allegedly lured their middle-school classmates out into the open Tuesday with a fire alarm and then opened fire on them, killing four girls and one teacher.

The 13-year-old Daly City boy who allegedly fired a shot at his principal Wednesday because he was angry over being suspended. The principal was uninjured.

The Princeton, Texas, high school student accused of slashing three teachers with a razor Wednesday when they tried to keep him from cutting himself.

No one can give pat answers as to why youngsters embark on unfathomable campaigns of terror and tragedy.

But one thing is clear.

Three shocking crimes do not a trend make, especially in a nation of 260 million people. The truth of it is, youth and adult violence alike actually are on the decline these days, both in California and in this country.

You wouldn't know it listening to the news; I wouldn't believe it if one of the murdered Jonesboro kids were mine.

Yet it's true. The FBI reports that violent crime perpetrated by minors is down 30 percent nationally over the past three years.

Juvenile violent offenses likewise are down in California, according to the state attorney general's office. Between 1991 and 1996, for instance, homicides committed by juveniles dropped 44 percent.

Some law-enforcement officials are skeptical of the figures, saying they may do no more than represent a dip in the overall teen population.

But the numbers are down when we account for that, too. In 1996, there were 464.7 arrests of youths for violent crimes per 100,000 children compared to 527.4 such arrests in the peak year of 1994.

I know it's hard to believe in a week such as this and it doesn't help that many media outlets rarely report "good news" statistics.

Fact: Between 1993 and 1996, violent crime in this country dropped 20 percent overall. Yet during that same period, the coverage of murders on ABC, CBS and NBC rose 720 percent.

Law enforcement has a better reason to not hype the drop in juvenile crime: the very real fear that communities will reduce their commitment to understanding and battling the reasons children turn to violence to appease their pain, anger or frustration.

The truth is, some things seem to be working -- and we shouldn't forget that in the wake of tragedies such as those occurring this week.

After-school programs. Community policing. Parenting classes. Gun collection programs. Increased after-school and summer job opportunities. Mentoring programs. Locking up violent kids. School violence-prevention curriculums. Tougher juvenile sentences. Trigger locks. Cops in the schools. Programs for at-risk kids.

Experts believe all deserve credit for the decrease in juvenile crime.

It's also worth remembering there are infinitely more good kids than bad. No need to shrink inside your home every time you see a pre-teen or adolescent male. In fact, over time, doing so only would isolate youngsters more; would only make matters worse.

What many "on the edge" adolescents really need is people who care; who watch them and guide them and correct them when they're wrong.

A day after the shooting deaths in Jonesboro, however, speeches in Congress centered on the politics of fear and vengeance over true leadership as several members called for more juvenile prisons in answer to the tragedy.

I like Marc Klaas' view on that one. Last fall, Klaas, father of murder victim Polly Klaas, said building prisons to stop crime is "like saying we can cure death by building more cemeteries."

Tough prosecution without prevention doesn't work; neither does the reverse.

Kids usually cry out for help when they need it. We must learn to listen. The 13-year-old accused in the Jonesboro case reportedly made threats the day before. Both boys wore camouflage clothing from head to toe that fateful morning.

Now, what was that all about? Did anyone wonder? Did anyone ask?

DIANA GRIEGO ERWIN'S column appears Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. Write her at P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, 95852, fax (916) 321-1109, e-mail dgriego@sacbee.com or call (916) 321-1057.

Coming to terms with violence in our schools

by Pedro Noguera
Berkeley, California
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Violence in schools is not new. Several recent reports - one by the American Psychological Association and another by the National Education Association - show a dramatic increase in the incidence of school violence. While the information in these reports is undoubtedly accurate, they help to create the mistaken impression that school violence has only recently emerged, as if to imply that there was once a more peaceful past.

However, if one examines history, it is clear that problems related to violence in schools have been around for almost as long as schools. To a large extent, that is because traditionally, urban public schools have served poor children, and poor children have experienced violence for a very long time.

But we must recognize that in many ways, our schools are safer than the communities where many children live. At least in schools, there are rules against violence and adults present who are supposed to enforce them. On the streets, in the playgrounds, and even at home, there is often no such protection. While it is true that schools are confiscating more weapons, and that acts of violence are being committed with greater frequency, in comparison to what is going on in society generally, our schools are still relatively safe.

However, too often, the individuals responsible for enforcing school discipline and maintaining order may have no credibility in the eyes of students. I can think of several schools where you can find kids shooting dice in the hallways or engaging in some other blatantly inappropriate behavior, and the teachers and other adults will pretend not to see it because they are afraid to tell the kids to stop.

In urban schools, most teachers do not live in the communities where they work, and have limited knowledge of what their students' lives are like outside of school. This gap is often compounded by differences based on race and class. These factors add to the inability of teachers and school personnel to respond effectively to the causes of violence in schools.

In addition, the usual punishments mean little to many kids. The threat of suspension or expulsion may be meaningless to a child who has already experienced failure in school or who may not attend regularly. Yet this continues to be relied upon as the only way to deal with violent behavior.

Currently the most fashionable response is to make schools more like prisons. In recent years, New York City has spent close to $28 million installing metal detectors. It is ironic that we are using prisons as our models for safety and security, even though prisons are generally not safe places.

When I look at this problem, I see it not only through the eyes of a researcher or policy-maker, but through personal experience. As a former teacher of African Studies at a continuation high school, I have worked with many young men who have been incarcerated and who have lived with violence. As a school board member, I have presided over expulsion hearings for students who have committed acts of violence. I also work closely with parents and teachers trying to develop an effective response to the violence that consumes our youth.

I also remember what it was like for me, growing up in New York. The schools I attended were violent places. At an early age, I learned that bullies often got their way, that the best way to avoid a fight was to show no fear, that you must always be prepared to hurt someone if necessary. At 14, my cousin of the same age was stabbed to death for refusing to give up his leather jacket. Most people I knew accepted violence as an ugly but unavoidable part of life.

At a gut level, I understand why kids fight or why they might react violently toward a teacher. I know why so many of them see violence as a legitimate means for resolving problems, because I have felt the same way.

However, in our society, we often categorize individuals who commit acts of violence as deviants. Many counselors and psychologists view violent behavior as a form of conduct disorder based on maladaptive tendencies. This type of labeling presumes that there are some who are potentially dangerous and who should be kept away from the rest of the population, which is ostensibly made up of good, honest, law-abiding people. But the dividing lines are artificial and leave us totally dumbfounded when a young person with no past record of violent behavior suddenly "goes off" on someone.

The failure of traditional methods of addressing school violence makes it more likely that alternative methods will receive serious consideration. As a starting point, we must identify some of the factors that contribute to the problem. Factors such as the availability of guns and the promotion of violence in the media and by political leaders may seem beyond the control of parents and school personnel. While I believe we must also devise strategies for addressing these issues, practically, we may want to start by focusing on how to create an environment within schools that promotes respect, dignity, and non-violence.

In my own research in schools, I have found that children consistently admire and respect those teachers that are strict in setting high standards for behavior and academic performance, and who demonstrate a personal interest in their students. Most schools have at least one such teacher, but too often, that teacher functions in isolation rather than being utilized as a role model. Establishing mentoring relationships among teachers and encouraging collaboration through dialogue over these issues is one way of spreading knowledge and experience around.

There are also ways to address security that do not dehumanize the school environment. At one junior high school in Oakland, California, an elderly woman serves as the campus security monitor, rather than an armed guard or a large, intimidating man. She lives in the same community as the children and understands their reality, their culture, and their needs. Without the threat of force, she is able to break up fights, enforce basic school rules, and keep those who do not belong off the campus. She can do this because she can speak in terms that the children understand, and most of all, because they know she truly cares about them. She has a moral authority derived not from her position, but from who she is and what she represents in their community.

In my interviews and conversations with students who attend schools with a reputation for violence, I am struck by their total dissatisfaction with their schools. Rather than appreciating the opportunities that might be created as a result of their education, they see school as useless and futile, and have no respect for their schools or the adults who work there. In fact, their feelings about school may be so negative that the institution itself may become the object of their violence through vandalism or harassment directed at teachers and other adults.

Increasingly, middle-class suburban schools, and even schools in affluent areas, are experiencing problems with violence. However, the problems of urban schools are particularly acute and complicated by their connection to poverty, crime and despair in the urban environment. Urban schools must not only

address the academic needs of their students, they must also find the resources to provide social and psychological support to students and their families.
Many schools are unable to respond to these issues because they define their mission too narrowly. Too often, problems like violence, drugs, teen pregnancy, and others are seen as beyond the scope of what is feasible for a school to address. Clearly, extra resources in both funding and skilled personnel are needed to expand the services schools provide. But perhaps even more important is the need for a broadened vision of what schools can and should do to respond to the needs of children.

Violence in schools is only a symptom of a much larger problem facing society. There are no easy answers. But at the minimum, we have to find ways to bring more adults with whom kids can identify into direct contact with kids on a regular basis. This may not sound like much, especially when compared to the high-tech solutions promoted in most quarters. But in the long run, it may have the greatest impact.

Dr. Pedro Noguera is a professor of education at the University of California, Berkeley. He is a former president of the Berkeley School Board. He is the father of four children.

If you have any thoughts on this or would like to contribute to an ongoing discussion in the **E-mail, Opinions & Discussion** column click here to send e-mail to publish@cts.com.
In Motion Magazine http://www.inmotionmagazine.com

Toward Peaceful Schools

The Christian Science Monitor, June 12, 1998
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Editorial
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Looking back on the school year just ending, many Americans will recall, sadly, a series of deadly shootings. Places like Jonesboro, Ark., and Springfield, Ore., are etched in memory.

Looking ahead to the fall, educators, parents, students, and community leaders ask: How can we keep it from happening again?

Many school districts have introduced metal detectors and search procedures. Uniformed police or security guards are becoming more common in halls and schoolyards. Administrators, teachers, and in some cases fellow students are alert to threats of violence that could turn into actual violence. Expulsions often follow such threats.

The need for these measures in many areas is hard to refute. Nationwide, just over 6,000 students were expelled last year for bringing guns to school, according to the Department of Education. The days when such problems were thought to be limited to depressed, inner-city districts are gone. Suburban and rural towns - like Springfield and Jonesboro - have seen some of the worst violence.

But crackdown measures have limitations. They are sometimes indiscriminate - summarily expelling, for instance, otherwise well-behaved kids for relatively minor infractions. They can also build an us-against-them mentality in schools, though diligent efforts to include students in antiviolence campaigns lessen such feelings.

Most important, surveillance and punishment don't address motives and attitudes that underlie violence. In some cases, anger and resentment are easily detected. Then counseling can help, especially if it involves teamwork among students, their families, and school staff. Often, however, such feelings are hidden, and violent behavior is unexpected.

In a recent Monitor article on school violence, a middle-school principal summed up what it takes to work with youngsters and turn them around: "You have to let them know they count. And you can't say, 'I don't have time for you now.'"

That simple advice works across the board - for parents, teachers, counselors, religious leaders, and even other teens.

Acting on it takes unselfishness, a genuine concern for others. Such elements of thought are critically needed to counteract the alienation and anger all too common today - and all too often glorified on screens and CDs.

Police methods and tough rules have their place. But the crucial changes will be less visible, occurring in the thinking of both students and the adults responsible for guiding and protecting them.

A Summary of Tales of Schoolyard Mediation
by Albie Davis and Kit Porter

From *Update on Law-Related Education*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Winter 1985, American Bar Association Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship, 750 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611. For more information about mediation in schools, contact: Albie Davis, Director, Mediation Project, Administrative Office of the District Court, Holyoke Square, Salem, Massachusetts 01970, (607) 745-9010. This article highlights three school-based programs which offer mediation as an alternative to "going to see the principal."

Hawaii

The Farrington High School mediation program began in the spring of 1981 because of the administration's anxiety about ethnic conflict and racial tension. Twelve Hawaiian high schools and intermediate schools now operate mediation projects. Schools on other Hawaiian islands also include mediation as part of their curriculum.

Training

Training takes place in two intensive days. Trainees undergo mediation individually by alternating between playing mediators and the parties to a dispute. A training manual defines mediation, summarizes the program, describes the procedure, contains mediation ability drills, and offers practice in communicating, asking questions and writing agreements.

Impact

The program has improved the school environment, minimized hostility and provided a peaceful means of resolving disputes.

San Francisco

The School Initiatives Program was planned with three major components -- a conflict resolution course in high schools, and classroom meetings and conflict manager programs for elementary schools.

Training

Students and teachers are taught conflict management skills and become trainers themselves so the program can replicate itself from year to year. Students selected for training are selected by their peers based on leadership and ability, both negative and positive. They receive 15 hours of training which is intended to build skills in active listening, problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, assertiveness, open communication and the conflict management process. The Conflict Managers are trained to look for agreements that meet certain criteria, asking such questions as, Will the resolution solve the problem? For good? Can both disputants really do what they promise? Is the agreement specific enough? Does it tell when, where, how and who? Is it balanced? Do both disputants share responsibility for making it work?

Impact

Evaluations show that disputes in the schools decreased. Principals of four schools housing the Conflict Manager program praised the program by stating that "conflict managers make significant contributions to a calm, friendly atmosphere on the playground," and "what students learn about resolving conflicts on the playground is carried into the classrooms."

New York

The School Mediators' Alternative Resolution Team (SMART) was started in the fall of 1983 by the Victim Services Agency (VSA), one of the largest dispute resolution centers in the state of New York. William Cullen Bryant High School in Queens was selected as a pilot site because of its size (just under 3,000), the diverse ethnic background of its students (42% white. 29% Hispanic, 17% black, 12% Asian, 1% American Indian), and the principal's interest in the innovative program. Goals were balanced between decreasing violence and teaching students new skills in communication and conflict resolution.

Training

Classroom outreach seminars advertise the program, attract new mediators and encourage support by faculty. Mediator training is conducted three times a year for students, school personnel and parents and is limited to 25 participants.

Impact

In mediation, mind rather than muscle is used for solving problems, and the cycle of revenge is short-circuited. Records stay clear, suspension is avoided and a mutually agreeable solution is reached.

Conclusion

School mediation programs have proved themselves beneficial to students, the school community and the community as a whole.

This information is provided by the Office of Prevention, Texas Youth Commission, P. O. Box 4260, Austin, TX 78765. Telephone (512) 424-6336 or e-mail prevention@tyc.state.tx.us

The Media and Questions of Control or Censorship

Media Violence: a Target in Wake of Jonesboro

The Christian Science Monitor, March 27, 1998
By: Alexandra Marks, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
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As the shock of the tragic shootings in Arkansas this week reverberates across America, the media have also become something of a target.

The daily doses of murder and mayhem heaped up on television and in movies are, at least for now, taking the brunt of the blame for the decision by two youngsters to put on fatigues, pick up a couple of guns, and fire at will at their classmates.

"It should shock us and maybe wake us up to recognize ... it's a cultural disease that we've got to address," said Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee (R) in the wake of the shootings that killed four children and one teacher.

Most media critics contend there's no direct link between fictional, on-screen violence and the horror in Jonesboro, Ark., at least not yet. But they are willing to lay part of the blame on the mass media for helping to nurture a culture in which violence is more tolerated than in the past.

For some educators, a bigger problem in the media is a lack of positive alternatives to physical aggression as ways to resolve conflicts. Because of that awareness, educators are helping a new generation of youngsters look at the media with a critical eye.

"It's part of the background, it's part of the culture in which we live that glamorizes the violence and makes it entertaining," says David Walsh of the National Institute on Media and the Family in Minneapolis.

Debate about the media's influence on viewers' violent and aggressive tendencies has raged since the 1950s. Of more than 3,500 studies, the vast majority have found some link between the amount of violence watched on television and increases in anti-social behavior.

"We know that media violence is most likely to provoke real-life violence when it's rewarded, seems realistic, and is directed against victims that seem appropriate," says Bob Lichter of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, a nonprofit media think tank in Washington.

But the media critics' critics argue that such conclusions are based on research that is tenuous, at best. They ask questions such as: Does watching violent shows tend to make children more aggressive, or do aggressive children tend to watch more violent programs?

"I'm skeptical of all of the evidence," says Jonathan Freedman, a psychology professor at the University of Toronto. "Particularly in light of the fact that violent crime is down in the last five years."

Mr. Lichter acknowledges the drop in the crime rate, but counters that the question is much more complex. "I would argue that broad social trends created more emotional disturbances in adolescence, which made kids more susceptible to media violence, more likely to act on their impulses," he says.

That raises a concern for many educators: The problem isn't so much what's on television, but what is not.

"The message [children] don't get is that the real heroes are not the Rambos of the world, but the people who search for nonviolent solutions to problems," says Linda Lantieri of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) National Center in New York, a nonprofit, school-based conflict-resolution program.

Sixth-grader Kevin Ervin knows that all too well. Five years ago, he says he was surrounded by violence - on television, in school, and in his Brooklyn neighborhood. Then the principal of his school was caught in drug-related crossfire and killed.

"I could look out my window and see the flowers and stuff right where he died," says Kevin. "I was really shocked."

At that young age, Kevin became determined to change things at his school. He became a leader in the mediation program RCCP introduced to help deal with the trauma. Today, at age 11, he's determined to change the world - from schoolyard fights to the negative, violent images he sees on television.

"In movies the superheroes shouldn't use violence; they should talk things out more," says Kevin. "Without the fear of violence, you can solve a problem more easily, and quicker."

Kevin is not daunted by arguments that the media are not likely to change as long as programming is tied to success in the ratings. He believes a change in the people will bring change on the screen.

"If it's grass roots, if it starts with us kids, we can spread it to other people," says Kevin, who'd now like to help the kids in Jonesboro.

While Kevin's ideas may sound young and idealistic, some scholars say the culture may finally be ready for them. "We've created very, very powerful technology, and when we start to realize how powerful and influential it really is, then I think we are led to the responsibility to manage it appropriately," says Dr. Walsh.

DUE SOUTH OF FUNNY FOR KIDS; 'SOUTH PARK' DOES OFFER A LESSON; THAT WE MUST TALK ABOUT MEDIA MESSAGES.

Los Angeles Times, May 3, 1998

By: Howard Karlitz, headmaster of Meadow Oaks School in. Calabasas

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All educators must encourage children to spend less time in front of a TV screen. By limiting quantity, the quality, or content, of the viewing experience is automatically addressed. Obviously, the less viewing time, the less chance there is of something offensive being seen by a child. However, in choosing to directly address the issue of quality, censorship comes into play. And for educators, censorship is a sensitive issue.

In general, the censor's role in regard to television is something that can only be taken on by a parent, at home. Recently, however, an issue has arisen in which it is appropriate for educators to concern themselves with content. That issue is "South Park," which Time magazine calls "an imaginative recreation of authentic experience" and goes on to refer to its "vibrant vulgarity."

I guess I'm somewhat out of touch, perhaps not sophisticated enough to understand the concept of vibrant vulgarity. I've always looked upon cartoons as an innocent venue, child-friendly, a seductive medium for kids. However, there's nothing innocent or child-friendly about foul-mouthed third-graders routinely harassing their disturbed teacher, who often addresses the class through his hand puppet; or Cartman, a student bigot; or Mrs. Cartman, his mother, whom the children refer to as a crack whore and a dirty slut; or Uncle Jimbo, a trigger-happy gun fanatic; or Mr. Hankey, a talking piece of feces; or Kenny, a destitute kid who dies horribly in every episode, etc., etc. . . .

I think about children, and I am offended that the show's creators would even consider a school as a setting. I think about teachers, hard-working professionals doing one of the most demanding jobs in the world, and I am hurt that the profession is subjected to such ridicule. I think about parents--supportive, active, involved, nurturing--and I can't even imagine the thought processes that would go into portraying the show's parents in such dishonorable, disrespectful and amoral terms.

One hopes against hope that this is not the direction media are moving toward in the name of ratings. However, when I hear that the next season's 20 episodes are ready to roll, and that there's talk of a feature movie, and that there's been $ 30 million in T-shirt sales, and that more than 250 unofficial web sites have sprung up, and that a sound-track album is being produced, and that according to Time, even though the show is particularly strong among 18- to 24-year-olds, an estimated 5% of the viewing audience is younger than 11(I suspect it's much more), then that direction is becoming clearer.

It is in Los Angeles, specifically the Hollywood-San Fernando Valley area, that real change can occur in regard to the type of television shows children will watch. Where else can high-level media decision-makers directly interact with the community they are trying to reach? That interaction should include authentic dialogue and feedback from parents and teachers regarding media messages that are impacting children. What better way to ensure responsible, child-appropriate programming?

Hopefully someone, somewhere will make an honest effort to jump-start this communications process. Until then, as educators, all we can do is strive to create school atmospheres that are ir touch with the world outside our doors yet at the same time reflect a collective spirit of childhood innocence. Anything that may impact negatively on that process, such as a show like "South Park," is something all parents should be aware of.

Violent TV News Called Bad For Kids; Researchers Say It's Too Graphic

The San Francisco Chronicle, August 18, 1998
By: Carl T. Hall, Chronicle Science Writer
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Frightening scenes of graphic violence during television news programs may be harming children, top psychologists said yesterday.

Researchers at the American Psychological Association's annual meeting in San Francisco blasted the broadcast media for playing up blood and gore on the evening news -- considered family fare and perhaps even educational in many households.

During a media briefing, the researchers also conceded that there is no clear evidence that TV-watching does any permanent psychological damage. Nor could the experts draw any link between media content and the apparent increase in such real-life tragedies as the recent school shootings in Arkansas and Kentucky.

Scott Poland, a psychologist in Houston, served as crisis team leader at both those incidents and joined the researchers in urging parents to use caution. He also called on news programmers to tone down the blood-drenched fare and consider playing up stories about such topics as violence prevention and recovery.

Joanne Cantor, author of the new book "Mommy I'm Scared: How TV and Movies Frighten Children and What We Can Do to Protect Them," urged parents to think twice before allowing their children to watch the news.

"Local news shows are especially violent," Cantor said, citing one study that found 44 percent of local news content consisted of disasters and crime stories.

Surveys have found evidence of "intense and debilitating fear" in youngsters viewing such episodes, Cantor said, adding that the unsolved Jon Benet Ramsey killing, in which the Colorado 6-year-old was found dead in her own home, may be "the worst possible" factual scenario in terms of fear-provoking potential.

Children can easily become convinced that similar horrors will befall them, she said. Cantor urged parents to be truthful when asked about horrible events, but to explain the details to the child in appropriate terms rather than rely on the graphic imagery of television.

Stories that hit close to home are potentially the most dangerous -- and can permanently warp a child's perception of how much violence actually takes place in the world nearby, according to Barbara Wilson, a communications professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Surveys Wilson and a colleague conducted of 125 schoolchildren found 94 percent considered news shows to be truthful most or all the time. More than half could vividly describe a story that frightened them. The kids who watched the most TV news offered the highest estimates of the crime rate.

In a related study, she found that the same story about gang violence provoked notably stronger reactions when the children were told it happened in their own community.

The researchers said parents should be given better tools for controlling what their children watch, including so-called V-chips in television sets that can be programmed to tune out violent content, including violent news programming.

However, other groups working with the broadcast industry to develop V-chip standards have already agreed to make news shows exempt from the rating system on which the chips would be designed.

Part of the concern was the difficulty of concocting the ratings. And a chip that automatically blocked all news presumably would shut out completely such all-news cable channels as CNN.

John Earnhardt, a spokesman for the National Association of Broadcasters in Washington, D.C., said the answer is not technology but rather closer supervision.

Violence is "part of real-life," he said. "You can't rate the news on a daily basis. . . . The best advice is that parents should be present when their children are watching television."

MEDIA COVERAGE OF VIOLENT ACTS DOES CONTRIBUTE TO FUTURE TRAGEDIES

The News Tribune (Tacoma, WA) , June 05, 1998, Friday

By: Arturo and Dolores Biblarz

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In an opinion piece recently published by The New York Times (5-23), Chicago Sun-Times editor in chief Nigel Wade explained why he did not run the story of the shooting in Springfield, Ore., on Page 1. He wrote about the need to balance the paper's responsibility to report the news against its responsibility to society as a whole.

Wade stated his conviction, based on 35 years experience in newspapers, that teenagers are influenced by the news they see and read. He explained that he did not want to risk the possibility that an unbalanced youth would see such a story on Page 1 and go on to emulate the behavior. The story fully covered pages 2 and 3, with an explanatory message to readers, whose reaction was overwhelmingly positive.

This is a dramatic and apparently rare position for a newspaper to take. The more common view heard from the media is that the public has a right to know and that there is no proof media coverage has any effect on this kind of behavior.

In fact, extensive research has shown that media coverage has a clear effect on suicide and violence. For example, researcher David Phillips of the University of California at San Diego has shown that media coverage of suicides increases the number of suicides following the initial coverage, that the effect only occurs where the publicity occurs and that adolescents are particularly susceptible to this effect.

This is not to say that contagion of this sort is the only cause of the kind of violence that occurred in Springfield. As with many other behaviors, such violence is produced by several factors, including individual predispositions, uncontrollable rage, inability to empathize with others and availability of firearms. The point is, however, that when these and other conditions are present, media coverage can be the catalyst that leads vulnerable youngster to take the final steps.

How can media coverage have such an impact? Obviously most of us are not affected in this manner. But it makes sense to say that different people are differently affected, and people who are vulnerable - that is, already engaged in active fantasies of violent behavior - are more likely to move from the realm of fantasy to active violence based on what the media shows them.

What can this be? A person filled with rage against a group of people - such as fellow students, parents or superiors at work - learns a way to get revenge. More importantly, people who feel that others discount them, that they do not matter to others, learn that this is a way to receive enormous attention and to experience a degree of power that otherwise would be unavailable to them.

A young person who feels slighted, ignored and tormented by others could well think that he, too, can "teach them a lesson" and make them sorry for mistreating him and at the same time realize that being on the front page of the newspapers, being the lead story on national news, being the subject of different television and radio programs and having all this happen for several days will make it clear to everyone that he does count, that he does matter, that he is not a person others can ignore.

These are very seductive and powerful incentives. It should not surprise us that widely covered stories lead to a rash of similar events. It should not surprise us that, in addition to the highly dramatic repetitions, there are innumerable instances of potentially dangerous behavior that occur, short of major tragedies, that are prevented by alert school personnel.

In light of this, Wade's courageous decision looms as a very significant act and one that should be reported on the front pages of newspapers in the hope that other editors will be moved to follow a similar course.

Arturo Biblarz is a professor of sociology at Pacific Lutheran University. Dolores Biblarz is a mental health professional and past director of clinical services at Greater Lakes Mental Health Foundation. The couple has written extensively about teenage suicide.

Protecting Young People on the Internet

Hate Groups Market to the Mainstream

The Christian Science Monitor, March 6, 1998
By: Robert Marquand, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
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Hate groups - motivated by bigotry - continue to be a growth industry both in the United States and abroad.

The number of organized hate groups in the US jumped 20 percent in the past year, to 474 in 1997, according to a new study. While several factors are responsible for the growth, experts say that the promotional savvy of extremist groups is clearly on the rise.

Many are now using media like the Internet and rock music to promote their message, selling professionally packaged CDs and establishing savvy Web sites that advocate violence and racial separation to a new market - the American mainstream.

At a Web site for skinheads from Minneapolis, one "clicks" on a swastika icon to join discussions on white pride, read about skinhead "victims" of the US government, or discover new neo-Nazi rock bands.

At the "www," for another right-wing group, Christian National Identity, a home page suggests that the group is "working to put God first in all things and ... secure ... a future for white children." The site has a bookstore with titles like "Separation or Mongrelization," "Psychopolitics - Art of Brainwashing," and "Did Six Million Really Die?" - a reference to the Holocaust.

Last year, 164 Web sites in the US featured causes like racial superiority and apocalyptic religious conflict. Three years ago only one such Web site existed.

"Popular culture is being used to mask a new kind of barbarism," says Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Montgomery, Ala., who helped conduct the study. "On the fringe you are finding a lot more hate sites on the Web with state-of-the-art graphics that are appealing to a broad variety of kids in the upper and middle class."

Another phenomenon is the use of rock music to send messages of hate. Resistance Records in Detroit, for example, a neo-Nazi label, sells about 50,000 albums a year via its Web page, offering buyers a choice of 14 different bands and styles. Owner George Burdi, the lead singer in a band called Racial Holy War whose songs advocate a new "Nordic ferocity" among whites, says he has "big plans for the Internet.... It's beautiful. It's uncontrollable."

Nor are the movements mainly found in the US. With the rise of music and Web sites, skinheads and neo-Nazis communicate across borders daily, gaining members at a rate estimated at possibly four times faster than a decade ago.

Andrew Miakovic, for example, a guitarist for the American neo-Nazi group Max Resist, was arrested in Sweden last year for raising his hand on stage in a Nazi-style salute, and went through a widely-publicized trial: "The courts didn't understand," Mr. Miakovic said in a later interview. "They were making us legends, doubling the number of our tape and record sales."

"This is a global phenomenon with its strongest influence now in Europe, from the Balkans to Russia,"

says James Hooper, editor of Fascism Watch, a newsletter in Washington. "They are much better organized than in the US, and unlike the US, they have a formal political expression through parties of [Jean-Marie] Le Pen in France, [Gianfranco] Fini in Italy, and especially [Jorg] Haider in Austria."

The US study, conducted by Intelligence Report newsletter, also documents a rise in Ku Klux Klan activity after years of decline, with one Klan region growing from one chapter in 1996 to 12 today. White supremacists in Denver last year killed a police officer and a black man standing by a bus. A suspect in the Jan. 29 bombing of a Birmingham, Ala., abortion clinic, Eric Rudolph, is reported to be a member of the Christian Identity movement, which believes whites are the "chosen people" of the Bible.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation last year counted 9,759 hate crimes, which included burned churches, murders, and painting hateful symbols like swastikas. Of those, race played a role in 63 percent of the cases, while religion, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin was an issue in about 10 percent each.

Yet the larger concern raised by the rise of hate in the airwaves and in cyberspace, as well as in the formation of groups, is not one of petty violence. Rather, experts say, it is that the expansion and increased extremism could cause a deeper and broader shift among young people toward an acceptability of positions that, while not murderous and violent, are nonetheless tolerant of positions formerly considered extreme.

The number of Americans that fall into the various extreme camps is hard to gauge, partly because the groups splinter so often, and because viewpoints change rapidly. Mr. Potok estimates that between 500,000 and 1 million people are involved in groups ranging from patriot and militia groups to the harder edged neo-Nazis.

"It is safe to say there are about 10,000 individuals who are hard core. The neo-Nazis, the fringe of the fringe, those who think about serious violence as part of their identity," says Potok. "That fringe number continues to rise slowly.'

MAN IS ACCUSED OF LURING LOCAL GIRL ON INTERNET; SUSPECT IS ARRESTED IN PENNSYLVANIA; TEEN WAS WITH HIM; PAIR MET IN CHAT ROOM, POLICE SAY

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 28, 1998
By: Tim Bryant; Of The Post-Dispatch
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After weeks of chatting over the Internet, a man from Pennsylvania persuaded a girl, 13, from the Ballwin area, to meet him at Six Flags and leave town with him, police and the FBI said Monday.

They took a road trip that ended at 10:45 p.m. Sunday near the man's home in the Pittsburgh suburb of Bellevue, Pa. Police and FBI agents were waiting.

George L. Simmonds, 40, was arrested and charged with interstate transportation of a minor for sexual purposes. He was in federal custody Monday in Pittsburgh, where he was scheduled for a hearing today in U.S. District Court.

Authorities said two to three months of chats led to the meeting. Sometimes, the chats were sexual in nature. Other times, the conversations on the Internet, over the telephone and through the mail were merely friendly, to gain the girl's confidence, they said.

On Saturday, the girl told her parents that she was meeting friends at Six Flags in Eureka. Instead, authorities said, she met with Simmonds in a parking lot at Six Flags.

The girl, unharmed, was reunited with her parents Monday, authorities said.

FBI officials and Ballwin police announced the arrest and charge Monday and urged parents to keep a close watch over their children's Internet contacts. An FBI official said that the way the suspect and victim met - through Internet chat rooms - is becoming a popular tactic for pedophiles and others wishing to harm children.

Willie Hulon, an FBI agent in St. Louis, said this is the fourth or fifth case the FBI has investigated from the St. Louis area this year. The problem is a growing one nationwide, he said.

Hulon said Simmonds and the girl had been communicating for two to three months in an Internet chat room. He would not describe the chat room or the specifics of their communication.

Chat rooms often make it possible for participants to have private and public conversations anonymously. The hosts of chat rooms and bulletin boards, as well as law enforcement workers, attempt to monitor some conversations, but the rooms and sessions are too numerous for close scrutiny.

Even before the man and the girl agreed to meet, some of the conversations had become sexual in nature, Hulon said.

The two also had talked on the phone and communicated by mail, Hulon said. The girl's computer was in her bedroom, and her parents were unaware of the extent of their daughter's communications with Simmonds, Hulon said.

Fingers do the stalking; Online pedophiles try to lure children, push kiddie porn

The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, June 28, 1998

Copyright 1998 The Atlanta Constitution

By: Ron Martz

Federal investigators say it was not unusual for 25-year-old Stephen Parrish of Atlanta to spend six hours a day in front of his computer, cruising the Internet.

But unlike most people who use the Internet for research or legitimate entertainment, Parrish had a more sinister motive, searching for child pornography and stalking young boys in teen chat rooms.

Last month in U.S. District Court in Atlanta, Parrish had his probation revoked for a previous child pornography conviction in Florida and was sentenced to eight years and a month in federal prison. Prosecutors said the sentence was one of the longest in memory for probation revocation but was justified because of Parrish's obsession with child pornography and young boys.

That type of online obsession is not unusual for pedophiles and some child molesters, investigators say.

"We've seen people who spend 12 to 18 hours a day on their computers doing this. They hardly have time to eat or sleep," said Gene Weinschenk, director of the Cyberspace Smuggling Center for the U.S. Customs Service in Washington.

Parrish is among what federal officials believe is a growing number of people, mostly male, who are using their computers to collect and distribute child pornography and to cruise numerous unmonitored chat rooms in search of potential underage sex partners.

"Instead of a dirty old man in a trench coat hanging out by the schoolyard, now you have dirty old men on the computer," said Pat Johnson, supervisory special agent in charge of Crimes Against Children investigations in the FBI's Atlanta office.

The "dirty old men" have turned out to be pillars of the community in some instances.

The former city manager of Camilla, Ga., and his wife were sentenced to 50 years in prison earlier this month after pleading guilty to molesting the woman's two children. Investigators say the couple had sex with the two teenage boys, photographed the acts and distributed the photos and videos on the Internet while collecting thousands of other images of child pornography on their computer.

An Alpharetta father of five and youth-league baseball coach pleaded guilty in May to transporting, distributing and possessing child pornography. He was arrested on his way to St. Louis to meet who he believed was a 13-year-old girl he had courted on the Internet. The girl turned out to be an adult police officer who was part of a sting operation.

In Lafayette, La., a former Boy Scout leader and his one-time roommate were each sentenced to 19 years and seven months in prison for sexually exploiting children and producing child pornography. Investigators found more than 1,800 images of child pornography on computer equipment used by the men.

Since January, customs officials say, they have arrested a minister, a church choir leader, a pediatrician and the former head of the child abuse unit of the New Orleans Police Dept., all on child pornography charges and all involving use of computers.

FBI agent Kenneth Lanning, who specializes in cases involving the sexual victimization of children for the bureau's Behavioral Science Unit in Quantico, Va., said customs had virtually wiped out importation of child pornography by the late 1980s and early 1990s.

"But the advent of high-speed modems and

computers made child porn easily accessible from anywhere in the world," Lanning said. The Internet also has enabled pedophiles and child molesters to more easily communicate with others like themselves, Lanning said. "They spend a lot of time online with people who are like them in an effort to validate their own behavior and feelings."

Customs officials say the surge in use of personal computers is directly linked to a marked increase in their arrests for kiddie smut. In fiscal 1995, Customs recorded 48 arrests for child pornography. The following year, that number doubled to 96 and in 1997 it jumped again to 136. As of April 1 of this year, Customs had recorded 104 child porn arrests.

In response to the problem, the FBI set up an anti-child-porn unit called "Innocent Images" that Johnson says is "the most overt undercover operation in the country." Originally started in 1993 as an investigation into a missing 10-year-old Baltimore boy, agents soon learned that a number of children in their area had been sexually exploited over a period of time and that computers were routinely being used to transmit images of child pornography involving them.

"That (investigation) gave rise to the fact that this was a national problem. Until that time we had no idea about the scope and magnitude of the problem," said FBI agent Pete Gulotta, a former member of the Innocent Images squad.

Innocent Images is now a nationwide undercover operation that attempts to identify individuals who use computers to recruit underage sex partners and those who distribute child pornography on a large scale. The operation has become something of a clearinghouse and repository for the FBI on child pornography and child molesters who cross state lines to find their victims, known to investigators as travelers.

Since its inception, Innocent Images has obtained 181 arrests, 176 indictments, and 201 convictions (some individuals were convicted of multiple offenses).

INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

*Never allow children to have computers in their rooms or any part of the house where they could have unsupervised access to the Internet.
*Keep the computer in a public area of the home and make unannounced checks to see what your children are doing online.
*Use services provided by your Internet service provider or commercially available software to block access to inappropriate chat rooms or sites.
*Instruct your children to never give out identifying information such as name, address, telephone number or school name in a public message forum such as a chat room.
*Encourage children never to respond to any messages that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, threatening, or that make them feel uncomfortable.
*Stress to your children that the 12- or 13-year-old girl or boy they think they may be chatting with online may actually be an adult.
*Pedophiles often compile profiles of children before recruiting them to become victims.
*Advise your children not to upload photographs of themselves to anyone they do not know personally. They may be providing those photographs to a pedophile.
*Your children should be instructed to never download photographs from anyone they do not personally know. They could be receiving pornography.
*Stress to your children the dangers of arranging face-to-face meetings with someone they have met on the Internet

Part II
Critical Thinking Questions

1. Does viewing violence on television make people less concerned about others and more prone to act violently?

2. Are young people influenced by television and music more than older adults?

3. Are locker searches essential to school safety? Metal detectors? Campus security officers? Is this a reasonable restriction on your right to privacy? Why?

4. How should students learn to protect themselves from predators on the Internet?

5. Should access to the Internet be controlled for people under 18? Who should control it? Parents? Government? Internet providers?

6. How comfortable are you in your school and your community? If you could enact or retract one policy related to protection from violence, what would it be?

Part III

QUOTES

Need something to write about for class? Consider writing a response to one of these quotes.

Currently the most fashionable response is to make schools more like prisons. In recent years, New York City has spent close to $28 million installing metal detectors. It is ironic that we are using prisons as our models for safety and security, even though prisons are not generally safe places. -- Pedro Noguera

We should not underestimate young people. Empower them and you'll be surprised at what they can do. --Vernon Hughes

Herein lies the heart of the debate over how to deal with juvenile delinquency in the United States: do solutions lie in punishment or prevention? Is it a question of building more facilities at the back end of delinquency, or creating more programs at the front end?
--Rep. Bill McCullum

When do many American teens say they learn about violence and what it does these days? First from their parents, at home. And second from the killing and bashing on TV and in the movies. Domestic violence, anger, aggression and neglect in real life or on the screen, undermine a child's growth and potential.
--Christian Science Monitor, Editorial, January 2, 1997

The line between protecting children and ruining childhood is a fuzzy one. In the abstract, many communities want places for children to play. But they often appear unwilling to pay for them and unwilling to build them across the street from their homes. -- Stephen Lynch

Kids' access to guns and violent TV, computer games and other media have provided the means and the models for the angry, frustrated, abused or suicidal child to be pulled to the trigger of a gun. Three out of every five TV programs contains violence, finds one recent study. And 89 percent of TV movies depict violenf situations to interpersonal conflict, finds another. --Kevin Dwyer

You know and I know that we cannot jail our way out of this problem. We've got to prevent more of these kids from getting into trouble in the first place. -- President Clinton

If the American people are to be the masters of their fate and of their elected government, they must be well-informed and have access to all information, ideas and points of view.
--ACLU

There is no vaccine for violence. It will take years to curb this epidemic. Now it is time to teach each child to think before acting, to care about others, to use words to problem-solve, to kill no more. --Kevin Dwyer

Part IV

APPENDIX

Part IV
Appendix

Related legislation that has recently become law in California

AB 307:	Pupil Suspension and Expulsion
AB 367:	Community Policing and Mentoring for School Safety Pilot Program
AB 1078:	Sex Offender Registration
AB 1756:	School Community Policing Partnership Act of 1998
AB 2261:	Local Juvenile Delinquency Prevention
SB 1095:	High Risk Youth Education and Public Safety Program
SB 1254:	Child Endangerment Protection Act of 1998
SB 1796:	Cyberstalking
SCR 10:	School Safety and Conduct

To learn more about any of this legislation, visit the following websites:
State Senate: http://www.senate.ca.gov
State Assembly: http://www.assembly.ca.gov

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